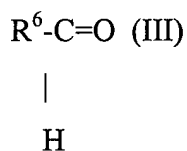


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (New) A method for preserving and/or storing microorganisms which exhibit at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, with the preservation and/or storage being effected in an aqueous medium which comprises at least one aldehyde, with the total aldehyde concentration being in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/l.

15. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the aldehyde is described by the formula III



where R⁶ can be substituted or unsubstituted, branched or unbranched, C1-C10-alkyl or C2-C10-alkenyl or substituted or unsubstituted aryl or hetaryl.

16. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the preservation step is carried out before the cells are treated with a reactant whose reaction is to be catalyzed by the cells.

17. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the aqueous medium comprises a total concentration of cyanide compounds, selected from the group consisting of nitriles, hydrocyanic acid and cyanide salts, which is at most 10 mol% of the total aldehyde concentration or wherein the aqueous medium does not comprise any additions of said cyanide compounds.

18. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the aldehyde is selected from the group comprising unsubstituted benzaldehyde and substituted benzaldehydes.

19. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the microorganism is selected from the species of the Enterobacteriaceae or Nocardiaceae family.

20. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the microorganism is selected from the group of the species Pseudomonas, Burkholderia, Nocardia, Acetobacter, Gluconobacter,

Corynebacterium, Brevibacterium, Bacillus, Clostridium, Cyanobacter, Staphylococcus, Aerobacter, Alcaligenes, Rhodococcus and Penicillium.

21. (New) A method according to claim 14, wherein the method is combined with at least one further method for stabilizing, preserving and/or storing enzymes, with said methods being selected from the group consisting of:

- a) adding at least one inorganic salt at a concentration of at least 100 mM;
- b) adding metal salts whose metal cation functions as a nitrilase prosthetic group;
- c) adding nitriles and/or amides.

22. (New) A preparation for preserving and/or storing microorganisms which exhibit at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, with the preparation comprising

- a) at least one aldehyde having a total aldehyde concentration in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/l, and
- b) cyanide compounds, selected from the group consisting of nitriles, hydrocyanic acid and cyanide salts, at a total concentration which is at most 10 mol% of the total aldehyde concentration.

23. (New) A preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22, wherein said preparation does not comprise any additions of cyanide compounds.

24. (New) A foodstuff, feedstuff, pharmaceutical or fine chemical produced from preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22.

25. (New) A method for preparing recombinant proteins, enzymes or fine chemicals using a preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22 or a preparation thereof.

26. (New) A method for preparing carboxylic acids and/or amides, comprising the following steps:

- a) culturing a microorganism which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity,

- b) adding at least one aldehyde, with the total aldehyde concentration being in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/l and storing at 0°C to 20°C until being used in step (c),
- c) bringing the aldehyde-treated preparation of said microorganisms into contact with at least one nitrile and converting said nitrile into a carboxylic acid and/or an amide.